

Message Text

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17

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SAJ-01

SAM-01 OMB-01 EB-07 TRSE-00 /079 W

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P R 171107Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9909

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

UNCLAS LONDON 04140

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, UK

SUBJECT: LEADERSHIP ELECTION PROCEDURES ADOPTED

REF: LONDON 4122

1. PARLIAMENTARY LABOR PARTY (PLP) MARCH 16 ADOPTED NEW PROCEDURES FOR ELECTING PARTY LEADER WHICH WILL PRODUCE NEXT PRIME MINISTER BY APRIL 5, PRECISELY WITHIN 3 WEEK TIMETABLE WE PREDICTED (REFTEL). TIMETABLE FOLLOWS: NOMINATIONS WILL CLOSE AT NOON, MARCH 22, WITH FIRST BALLOTS ISSUED LATER THAT DAY AND RESULTS TALLIED BEGINNING AT NOON MARCH 25; IF NO CANDIDATE RECEIVES ABSOLUTE MA-
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JORITY OF BALLOTS CAST, SECOND BALLOT WILL BE ISSUED

MARCH 25 WITH RESULTS TALLIED MID-DAY MARCH 30; IF THIS BALLOT TOO IS INCONCLUSIVE, THIRD (AND FINAL) BALLOT WILL BE ISSUED THAT DATE AND TALLIED AT NOON APRIL 5.

2. FOLLOWING SPECIAL PROCEDURES WILL APPLY. NO NOMINATIONS ALLOWED WITHOUT APPROVAL OF PROSPECTIVE NOMINEE. WHEN BALLOT FAILS TO PRODUCE CLEAR WINNER, LAST PLACE CANDIDATE WILL BE DROPPED, EXCEPT THAT WHEN TOTAL VOTES FOR TWO LOWEST FINISHERS ARE LESS THAN NUMBER RECEIVED BY THIRD TO LAST CANDIDATE, LOWEST TWO WILL BE DROPPED. CANDIDATES MAY WITHDRAW AFTER EACH BALLOT. NO NEW NOMINATIONS WILL BE ALLOWED BETWEEN BALLOTS.

3. PLP APPOINTED FIVE-MEMBER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OF RESPECTED BACKBENCHERS TO TALLY BALLOTS. WHILE TWO, IAN MIKARDO AND FRED WILLEY, ARE IDENTIFIED RESPECTIVELY WITH TRIBUNE AND MANIFESTO GROUPS, MAJORITY -- GEORGE STRAUSS (FATHER OF THE HOUSE), ARTHUR BOTTOMLEY AND SYDNEY IRVING -- ARE NOT IDENTIFIED WITH ANY GROUP.

4. COMMENT: PROCEDURES ADOPTED WOULD APPEAR TO FAVOR CALLAGHAN, WHO IS GENERALLY REGARDED AS "EVERYONE'S SECOND CHOICE." APPEARANCES, HOWEVER, MAY BE DECEIVING, AND MORE DEFINITIVE ASSESSMENT WILL HAVE TO AWAIT FINAL LIST OF NOMINEES.

ARMSTRONG

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